

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 2, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Summary (PW14098) - (City Wide) (Outstanding Business)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Bob Paul Manager of Winter Control (905) 546-2424, Extension 7641
SUBMITTED BY:	Gerry Davis, CMA General Manager Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

On a Motion at the March 17, 2014, Public Works Committee meeting, staff were directed to report back to the Public Works Committee with options and alternatives for a City of Hamilton sidewalk snow clearing program to include, but not limited; to best practices of other municipalities; and an update on slips and fall claims made to the City as a result of snow and ice-packed sidewalks.

Information:

As directed by Council staff have investigated the best practices of a number of outside municipalities and have provided a summary of the findings as illustrated in Report PW14098 as Appendix A. It was found that service delivery models for the sidewalk snow clearing program from each surveyed municipality vary greatly from:

- Clearing only City owned sidewalks along municipality owned property and reverse frontage lots;
- To clearing all sidewalks within the municipality;
- or by establishing priority city sidewalk routing based upon major arterials, collectors, bus routes, hospital, schools, tourism areas, BIA's, large employment centres and senior centres.

Sidewalk ploughing typically is triggered for most municipalities at the 5cm threshold with target pavement conditions varying from bare pavement to the more typical snow packed condition. Completion time for the sidewalk snow clearing program for most municipalities is 24 hours from the end of the event, to 72 hours after commencement of

**SUBJECT: Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Summary
(PW14098) - (City Wide) - Page 2 of 3**

the sidewalk ploughing operations (Toronto), to five working days from commencement of the residential sidewalk ploughing operations (Winnipeg). In most cases those municipalities that do service their entire sidewalk network do so only after the adjacent street or all of the roads within the City or Town have been ploughed.

In the event that Council wishes to further consider the development from one of the three examples for a possible city wide municipal sidewalk maintenance program, staff recommend the engagement of consulting services to prepare a detailed program based on an assessment of the existing inventory, plough routing, staffing needs, with recommendations for program service levels and a program delivery model.

Estimated Sidewalk Snow Clearing Services Cost

Based upon the Ancaster Ward 12 service delivery model the average cost from the past three winter seasons uses a combination of standby contractual sidewalk ploughing units, in-house sidewalk ploughing units and manpower costs. It is estimated that the cost to provide the service city wide will cost approximately \$3.6 million for a typical winter season. The program service level provides for snow clearing activation at the minimum accumulation of 5.0 cm based on average seasonal demands, and *no application* of de-icing materials. Council should be aware the bare pavement condition can only be achieved through the application of de-icing material. The addition of the application of de-icing material will increase the cost associated with equipment time and material costs which intern will increase the overall program costs. This preliminary program cost estimate is considered accurate within a margin of error of 15% +/-.

If so directed, staff would engage the services of a consultant to refine the program estimate through more detailed research, staffing impacts, program routing design and analysis on service.

Slip and Fall Claims

The following chart represents the claims experience for falls on City sidewalks due to icy/snowy conditions for the years 2008-2013:

Year	# Claims	Current Expense
2009	45	385,000
2010	18	167,000
2011	52	1,070,000
2012	19	262,000
2013	52	625,000

The City experienced unusually harsh weather conditions for the first four months of 2014. In particular, consistently low temperatures created almost a “perfect storm” for the accumulations of ice on sidewalks as often it was too cold for a salt application to be an effective treatment. The number of sidewalk slip and fall claims for 2014 presently stands at 49. If November and December see relatively average weather conditions, it is expected that the total number of sidewalk slip and fall claims for the year will be in

the range of seventy to eighty, which represents a significant increase over any of the previous five years.

Presently, for the defence of claims, the City relies primarily on the by-law requiring property owners to clear sidewalks abutting their property of snow and ice. If the City were to adopt a program of winter sidewalk maintenance, the focus of the defence would shift largely to establishing that the City has operationally met the standards of its own program.